ECONOMICS JOURNALIST HOBART ROWEN DIES; REPORTER AND FINANCIAL EDITOR AT THE POST

(By Claudia Levy and Bart Barnes)

Hobart Rowen, 76, an economics reporter and editor at The Washington Post who played an important role in bringing coverage of business news and economics into the mainstream of American journalism, died of cancer April 13 at his home in Bethesda.

Mr. Rowen, a leading economics journalist for five decades, joined the news staff of The Post in 1966. He was a pioneer in bringing economic news to Page One and was known for his ability to explain domestic and global economics in terms that helped readers relate them to their own bread-and-butter issues.

His work took him to conferences around the world, to the boardrooms of industry and business and to the seats of power in Washington and other national capitals. In his news stories and syndicated columns, Mr. Rowen broke new ground on such issues as fiscal and monetary policy, the implications of appointments to the Federal Reserve Board and the actions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

''He was the first economics reporter of his generation who could go to a press conference about economics and know more than the guy who gave it,'' said Benjamin C. Bradlee, the former executive editor of The Post, who hired Mr. Rowen ''to bring the newspaper's business coverage from nowhere to somewhere.''

When Mr. Rowen arrived at The Post, the paper's business and financial staff consisted of one editor, two assistants and a news aide, and most of its coverage was devoted to promotions and retirements at local businesses. Today, The Post's business section includes a staff of 55 with bureaus in New York and Tokyo.

In addition to his work in print journalism, Mr. Rowen appeared frequently on television broadcasts such as ''Washington Week in Review,'' ''Nightly Business News,'' ''Meet the Press'' and ''Face the Nation.''

''We have lost one of this nation's preeminent economic journalists,'' Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin said yesterday at a speech in Los Angeles. ''He was a leader in bringing to the fore those issues which are so central to the economic debate.''

Mr. Rowen was born in Burlington, Vt. He grew up in New York and graduated from the City College of New York. In 1938, he joined the Journal of Commerce in New York as a copy boy and nine months later was hired on as a reporter to cover commodities.

He took courses at the New York Stock Exchange and wrote a pamphlet on futures trading. He was assigned to the paper's Washington bureau in 1941 to cover the new defense agencies and show their interaction with business.

Mr. Rowen took a two-year break from journalism during World War II to work as a public relations specialist with the information division of the War Production Board.

In 1944, he joined the Washington bureau of Newsweek, writing a business trends page for the magazine that interpreted news for the business community. Until joining The Post at the invitation of former Newsweek colleague Bradlee, Mr. Rowen remained with the news magazine.

As financial editor and assistant managing editor for business and finance at The Washington Post, Mr. Rowen oversaw the launching of the newspaper's Sunday Business section and an expansion of its business coverage. He continued his column and broke many stories, including a prediction that dollar devaluation and wage-price controls would be imposed before those events occurred in 1971.

In 1967, he drew the wrath of the Johnson administration with a story quoting a ''high government official'' to the effect that costs of the war in Vietnam would rise sharply above official estimates. It turned out later that the unnamed official was William McChesney Martin, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board.

Mr. Rowen returned to full-time writing in 1975, and in 1978, he was named international economics correspondent. He said he found the beat increasingly important because in many respects Washington, not New York or London, had become the financial capital of the United States and of the world. He covered the fluctuation of the dollar and other currencies, third World economics, international trade and world economic summits.

In addition to his twice-a-week column, ''Economic Impact.'' he contributed to publications, including Harpers and the New Republic.

His books included ''The Free Enterprisers: Kennedy, Johnson and the Business Establishment,'' ''The Fall of the President and Bad Times and Beyond'' and ''Self-Inflicted Wounds: From LBJ's Guns and Butter to Reagan's Voodoo Economics,'' published last year.

''Self-Inflicted Wounds'' told a story of ''blunder, mismanagement, stupidity and irresponsibility by officials whose chief obligation to govern the nation was betrayed by their embrace of politics misconceived and ineptly applied.'' This had led the nation on a path of ''slow but steady self-strangulation,'' he wrote.

In 1992, Mr. Rowen wrote for The Washington Post Health section about the misdiagnosis of his prostate cancer that led to incorrect treatment at Georgetown University Hospital. He emphasized the need for a second opinion, even at the nation's most prestigious medical institutions.

Mr. Rowen's honors included Gerald Loeb awards for best economics column, for a piece on problems faced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and for lifetime achievement. He also received the distinguished service award for magazine writing from the Sigma Delta Chi journalism honorary society.

He also received the John Hancock award, the A.T. Kearney award and the Townsend Harris medal of CCNY. He was elected to the Hall of Fame of the D.C. chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and won the first professional achievement award of the Society of American Business Editors and Writers.

Mr. Rowen served on the Town Council of Somerset in Chevy Chase from 1957 to 1965 and was president of the Society of American Business Writers and the Washington professional chapter of Sigma Delta Chi. He was a member of the National Press Club, the National Economists Club and the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild.

Survivors include his wife of 53 years, Alice Stadler Rowen of Chevy Chase; three children, Judith Vereker of London, James Rowen of Milwaukee and Daniel Rowen of New York City; and five grandchildren.

## AFFIRMING EQUALITY IN RHODE ISLAND

### HON. GERRY E. STUDDS

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 1, 1995*

Mr. STUDDS. Mr. Speaker, on March 19, the Rhode Island House of Representatives approved legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. If, as expected, the bill clears the Senate and is signed by the Governor, Rhode Island will become the ninth State to provide such protections to its citizens.

This milestone was marked by the Providence Sunday Journal of April 2, 1995, in a superb column by M. Charles Bakst which I am proud to insert in the RECORD.

The article describes the passage of this legislation through the eyes of one of the people who worked hard to bring it about. His name is Marc Paige. Among other things, he is gay and living with AIDS. He is also a former member of my campaign staff whom I am proud to call my friend. His personal journey is a familiar story for all who grow up gay in our society, and the families and friends who love them.

The article follows:

[From the Providence Sunday Journal, Apr. 2, 1995]

GAY RIGHTS ACTIVIST SAVORS BIG VICTORY

(By M. Charles Bakst)

When the House last week passed the gay rights bill, supporters of the measure were jubilant. One of them, watching from a gallery seat, was Marc Paige of Cranston.

He is 37. He is a gay activist. He is Jewish. And he has AIDS.

Paige is part of the army that has long fought for this measure to ban discrimination against homosexuals in employment, credit, housing, and accommodations. It has kicked around the capitol for 11 years and now, having survived the House, appears headed for Senate passage and signing by Governor Almond.

''All Rhode Islanders won today,'' Paige enthused after Wednesday's House vote. And, of course, he was right. Whenever society takes a stand against discrimination against anyone, it is a victory for everyone. But if you sit and talk with Paige, you will get a better appreciation of why this bill has such meaning for gays and lesbians, and of the hurt and pride that motivate him to seek its passage.

If the bill is enacted, he says, it will be a ''very big deal.'' Though not transforming society overnight, it will be a start:

''It's going to give gay people the knowledge that they do have recourse if they are discriminated against. And it's going to, hopefully—and I have no delusions that it's going to be in my lifetime—make things easier for, particularly, the children who realize that they're gay, that they're lesbian. Because it pains me the most to know that kids today are still experiencing the isolation, the fear, that I had to go through. Being a teenager is hard enough. These are needless, senseless, tragic emotions that they have to deal with.

Paige, who has helped organize demonstrations against anti-gay-rights legislators, can be as militant as they come. But he also can sound gentle, and sunny.

A friend, former Sundlun administration staff chief Dave Cruise, says, ''He's an amazing person. With what his future holds for him, he doesn't bear ill will toward anyone.''

Paige tested HIV-positive in 1989. He says this was a result of unprotected gay sex years earlier in a less enlightened age. By 1993, he had full-blown AIDS.

''I feel sometimes like I'm living with a time bomb inside me,'' he says. ''And I know that I could get very sick. But I'm starting new treatments and I'm trying to stay healthy as long as possible and I take it a day at a time.''

He adds, ''I couldn't say for sure that I'm going to be here for my niece's bar mitzvah, which will be in three years. I'd say it's even money. But we don't know what will be developed, so there's always hope. As long as you're breathing, there's hope.''

He grew up in a middle-class family.

As a teenager, he realized he was gay—and that he felt isolated.

''Teenagers especially want to fit in, and, when you're gay, when you're lesbian, you don't fit in. So then I threw my energy into other causes. I was very involved with B'nai B'rith youth . . . I worked very hard on Jewish causes, on Israel.''

He was a student at Cranston West and he was still in the closet:

''I knew a couple of gay people at my high school. They were constantly tormented and harassed. So the messages I received throughout all of society were, 'This is very bad.' So I kept it hidden, as most gay kids do.''

Then he went to college in New Jersey:

''One night, when I enrolled at Rutgers University, my freshman year, a snowy December night, I got up my courage and I went to a meeting that was advertised in the school newspaper for the Homophile League, which is a very antiquated term, but this was back in 1976, and I expected to find the monsters that society told me would be there, and what I found were wounderful, supportive, warm, welcoming people and I realized then I wasn't some terrible person.''

Now it was Christmas vacation:

''I wanted to share the joy that I was feeling with my parents. I was finally able to be comfortable with who I was, and I shared that information with them. Their reaction was shock, disappointment.''

Did they send him to a psychiatrist?

''No, because I wouldn't have gone to a psychiatrist. There was nothing wrong with me . . . It took me about six years of torment, really, to come to this position, so I wasn't going back and I wasn't going to feel badly about myself ever again on this issue.''

Eventually, he says, his parents came around, ''because they loved me, whoever I was.''

Paige often speaks in schools and in temples, including Barrington's Temple Habonim, where I first encountered him. He says his Jewishness played a large role in shaping his gay activism:

''Growing up, my parents instilled in both my sister and myself a strong sense of Jewish identity, and also we learned about the injustices that were brought upon the Jewish people throughout the ages, particularly, of course, only 50 years ago, when 25, 30 percent of the world's Jewry was eliminated from the planet. I have seen what the seeds of hatred, bigotry can do.''

He no longer works—he was in the fashion industry and, for awhile, in the state Department of Administration—but he's still out speaking, often on AIDS prevention.

This past Tuesday, he was buttonholing legislators, and on Wednesday, the day of the House vote, he was at the State House again to take in the scene.

Outside the House entrance, we happened upon Linc Almond, a backer of the bill. ''I want to thank you very much for your support,'' Paige said. In fact, he had some news for the governor. When Almond was barraged by anti-gay-rights calls on a recent Steve Kass WHJJ talk show, Paige's was the only supportive call that got through.

We went up to a House gallery and there was Eileen Gray, Paige's 66-year-old mother, sporting a button that said, ''I'm straight. But not narrow.''

I took her aside for a moment and asked why she was there.

''Because I believe in the bill and I'm supporting my son,'' she said.

Many parents would say, ''It's bad enough that he's gay. Why does he have to be public about it? The last thing I want is to be public.''

Gray said, ''I'm his mother. I love him with all my heart and soul. I don't think there's anything wrong with him. I don't think he's 'sick.' I have become educated and wiser, hopefully, to understand that a certain percentage of the population, from the beginning of time, is born gay. What's the big deal?''

Not that it was easy for her to accept initially. She said when she first heard Marc's news, she spent a day in bed with a headache, and her daughter, three years older than the son, phoned.

''My daughter Robin called me and said, 'Mom, what's the matter?'''

''I said, 'It's Marc.'''

''She said—in a frantic voice suggesting a fear of something like cancer— *'What?'*''

''Marc told me he's gay.''

The daughter, relieved it was only that, said, ''Thank God.''

That helped, Gray said.

Now Marc, with AIDS, does face a grim future. But Gray was upbeat.

''He's very good,'' she said. ''He takes very good care of himself.

And, with medical technology, I think he's going to be here a long, long time. I truly believe that.''

Now the House debate began and droned on—with exquisite odes to equality and dignity, but also with ugly, arrogant talk of gays and their so-called lifestyle that is, in some eyes, such an abomination before God.

Paige told me had a headache. ''I don't know if it's from this or the AZT I took a couple of hours ago.''

He sat with a House seating diagram, with notations of the expected vote lineup, which was thought to be very close.

And then the actual tally came—passage by a surprisingly comfortable 57 to 41. Thrilled, he turned to me and said, ''Wow!''

As they made their way out of the gallery, he and his mother kissed.

## EXEMPLARY VA EMPLOYEES

## HON. G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 1, 1995*

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, our human vocabulary does not contain the words to accurately describe the horror, the sadness, the profound feelings of grief and loss we have all experienced since the April 19th bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building. This monstrous act—targeted at our young innocents, at the elderly seeking their Social Security benefits, at disabled veterans checking on their vocational rehabilitation or compensation benefits, at the hundreds of Federal employees laboring conscientiously to serve their fellow citizens—epitomized man's inhumanity to man. In response, we want to reach out to the injured and to the families of those who are missing or dead, and speak the words that will relieve their suffering. Knowing this is impossible we nonetheless struggle to share with these blameless victims our concern for them and the pain we feel on their behalf.

In contrast to the ugliness of the bombing, countless men and women in Oklahoma City epitomize, by their selfless heroism, courage, valor, and determination, the deep concern most of us feel for one another in this country. I am particularly proud of the extraordinary response of the Department of Veterans' Affairs [VA] employees in Oklahoma City. Most of you read in the April 23, 1995, edition of the Washington Post the remarkable account of the brave actions of the VA staff who were in the Federal Building at the time of the explosion. I will not soon forget the description of Paul Heath, a VA counseling psychologist, who, having escaped the collapsed building, returned to his ruined office with a stretcher to rescue his badly-injured colleague. For the benefit of my colleagues who did not have an opportunity to read the Post article, a copy follows:

[The Washington Post, April 23, 1995]

PELTED WITH GLASS, BURIED BY WALLS, THIS OFFICE OF EIGHT PULLED THROUGH

(By William Booth)

OKLAHOMA CITY.—They began an extraordinary day as the most ordinary of people.

On Wednesday morning at 9, they sat at their computers or leaned on their desks in the Department of Veterans Affairs' small office on the fifth floor of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. There were eight of them that morning, people similar to hundreds of thousands of federal employees across the nation.

''Just the most normal day,'' rehabilitation specialist Diane Dooley would recall later. ''That's how the day started, just the same old, same old.''

But not for long. In the time it might have taken to retrieve a file, the office was ripped in half by a massive explosion from a car bomb set off just outside the building's front entrance. Those inside were buried by an avalanche of debris or swept away in a blast of flying glass.

In the torrent, they lost fingers and eyes and ears. Their bones were broken and twisted. Some even lost their sense of where and who they were, becoming white ghosts covered in dust and blood, wandering in shock through a building filled with the dead.

Later, at least one of them would wonder why he was not more brave; another would claim they were not heroes. All of them wept. But all of them survived the bomb that went off at 9:04 a.m.

''We were so lucky,'' said Jim Guthrie. ''I know if things had just been a little bit different, that we could all be buried out there in the rubble.''

The VA office was not unlike the 14 other agencies' offices in the building. Each was filled with bureaucrats, secretaries, clients—perhaps 800 people in all that morning, now grimly divided between the survivors and the dead. Although its occupants were more fortunate than many others, the story of the VA office is in many ways the story of them all.

The eight VA employees pushed papers but they also pushed disabled veterans, helping them get jobs and benefits. They thought of themselves as a family: They told jokes, they made calls, and they filled file cabinets with stories of veterans getting ahead in life or spiraling ever downward. Of the eight workers, five were veterans themselves.

They called themselves by alphabet letters, as federal employees so often do—CPs and VRSs and LVERs: Counseling Psychologists and Veteran Rehabilitation Specialists and Local Veteran Employment Representatives. On Wednesday morning, they were discussing their QRs, or Quality Reviews. They were busy, one recalled without irony, ''reinventing government.''